

## **Children Encouraged to Participate in National School Lunch, Breakfast, and After-School Snack Programs**

**MONTPELIER** – The Vermont Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs announced its policy for free or reduced-price meals for children served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the After-School Snack Program (ASP).

The Agency encourages children to participate in their local school's meal program and encourages families to complete an application for free and reduced price meal benefits. Each school and/or central office provides free and reduced price meal applications and has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party. Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who are eligible for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch at no additional charge through state support of school nutrition programs. Local SFA officials have adopted the following household-size and income criteria for determining eligibility:

### **INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES: July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014**

Household Size	Free					Reduced Price				
	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	14,937	1,245	623	575	288	21,257	1,772	144	818	409
2	20,163	1,681	841	776	388	28,694	2,392	1,196	1,104	552
3	25,389	2,116	1,058	977	489	36,131	3,011	1,506	1,390	695
4	30,615	2,552	1,276	1,178	589	43,568	3,631	1,816	1,676	838
5	35,841	2,987	1,494	1,379	690	51,005	4,251	2,126	1,962	981
6	41,067	3,423	1,712	1,580	790	58,442	4,871	2,436	2,248	1,124
7	46,293	3,858	1,929	1,781	891	65,879	5,490	2,745	2,534	1,267
8	51,519	4,294	2,147	1,982	991	73,316	6,110	3,055	2,820	1,410
For each additional household member add	5,226	436	218	201	101	7,437	620	310	287	144

Application forms were sent to all homes with a letter to parents or guardians at the beginning of the school year. To apply for free or reduced-price meals at any time during the year, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. Additional copies are available at the principal's office in each school or on the Child Nutrition Programs website: <http://bit.ly/18DMTYQ>. The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. For SFA officials to determine eligibility, households receiving 3SquaresVT (food stamp benefits) or

Reach-Up (TANF) must list the children's names, a 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up case number, and the signature of an adult household member. All children in households with any household member receiving benefits under assistance programs are eligible for free meals. Children in Other Source Categorically Eligible (i.e.: children categorized as homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, Even Start, and foster children, if known) are also eligible for free meals.

**IF YOU DO NOT LIST A 3SQUARES VT OR A REACH-UP NUMBER:** the application must have the children's names, total household members, the amount of income each member received last month, the signature of an adult household member, and the last four digits of the adult's social security number or the mark the box if he or she does not have one. Foster children also categorically qualify for free meals/milk, regardless of the child's income. If you have foster children living with you and wish to apply for such meals or milk for them, please complete the application as instructed. Under the provisions of the policy, the approving official will review applications and determine eligibility.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, the determining official(s), as designated by the SFA, shall review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the eligibility ruling may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents may also make a formal request for an appeal hearing of the decision and may do so orally or in writing with the school's hearing official. Parents or guardians should contact their child(ren)'s school(s) for specific information regarding the name of the determining official and/or hearing official for a specific school or district.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

**DIRECT CERTIFICATION:** Any member of a household currently certified to receive 3SquaresVT and/or Reach-Up benefits will be notified of the enrolled children's eligibility and that the enrolled children will be provided free benefits unless the household notifies the SFA that it chooses to decline benefits. If 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up households are not notified by their school of their eligibility, they will need to submit an application.

A list of schools participating in the programs is available upon request. For more information, please contact: Laurie Colgan, Director, AOE Child Nutrition Programs at (802) 828-5153 or [laurie.colgan@state.vt.us](mailto:laurie.colgan@state.vt.us).

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